

Mayo Sustainability Fund

Criteria & Grant Eligibility

Programme: Collaboration for Sustainability

About Community Foundation Ireland

Community Foundation Ireland and its partners believe in equality for all in thriving communities. We work with individuals, families, businesses, other trusts, foundations, and the Government to turn one-time giving into long-term, meaningful support. We use over 25 years of experience to help donors turn their goals into effective action.

We work with our partners to find solutions to both old and new challenges. Through these partnerships, we aim to build an Ireland where barriers are removed, and communities can succeed. Working with you, other non-profits, and donors, we are dedicated to achieving this goal.

About Sunflower Charitable Foundation

The Sunflower Charitable Foundation, established in 2021, has a mission to support the growth of resilient communities – with a particular focus on the wellbeing of children and young people – and to contribute to environmental sustainability in Ireland and overseas.

About the Mayo Sustainability Fund

The Mayo Sustainability Fund supports local efforts to promote sustainability in Mayo communities.

In 2023, the Sunflower Charitable Foundation and Community Foundation Ireland commissioned a scoping study from UCD to assess the potential for a Sustainability Fund in Mayo. This study, along with a follow-up community consultation, showed that Mayo has a strong network of organisations working in various areas of sustainability that could benefit from dedicated funding.

The study identified key challenges such as limited knowledge of funding sources, lack of flexible and long-term funding, and limited time and resources for applying for funding. It

also highlighted gaps in funding for core operations, capital needs, networking, peer learning, deep community engagement, and project scaling.

In 2025, Community Foundation Ireland, Sunflower Charitable Foundation, and other donors in the Community Foundation's network are working together to pilot the Mayo Sustainability Fund to address these challenges. While we cannot address all challenges, we aim to help by providing funding that supports cohesion in the sector through networking, growth, and development. In 2025, the Fund will offer flexible funding to help organisations collaborate, learn, and expand. As this is a pilot year, we will continue to listen to the community and adjust our support accordingly.

Grant Making Programmes

There are two grant programmes available through the Mayo Sustainability Fund. Organisations can apply to one or both:

1. Project Plus – small to medium-sized grants to support your organisation's projects or programmes.
2. Collaboration for Sustainability – medium and large grants to support joint efforts, networking, and shared services.

You can submit **one application per programme**, provided each application meets the eligibility criteria.

About the Collaboration for Sustainability Grants Programme

There is a clear and pressing need in Mayo for stronger peer-to-peer learning, meaningful collaboration, and deep community engagement. Local organisations have told us they often work in isolation, without enough opportunities to share knowledge, pool resources, or build strong, resilient networks. This lack of connection makes it harder to tackle the complex sustainability challenges facing communities across the county.

In response, the Collaboration for Sustainability Grants Programme has been developed to support organisations in Mayo to build their capacity for collaboration and networking. The programme is based on extensive consultation with communities, carried out on behalf of the Sunflower Charitable Foundation and Community Foundation Ireland. **It is designed to help organisations work together both strategically and practically—through joint planning, shared services, co-created initiatives, and more.**

By funding this kind of collaborative work, we aim to create long-term benefits for Mayo's sustainability sector, the people who work in it, and the communities they serve. Our goal is to help build lasting infrastructure—strong relationships, shared tools, and coordinated action—that enables organisations to connect, support one another, and drive collective

impact. Projects supported through this strand must clearly show how they will contribute to advancing sustainability across Mayo in a meaningful and measurable way.

Examples of supported projects include (but are not limited to):

- Shared staff roles (e.g., governance, communications, administrative staff)
- Evaluating collective efforts
- Creating a skills directory
- Design-thinking workshops
- Mapping assets and stakeholders
- Setting up representative bodies or roles
- Joint training (e.g., project management, funding)
- Collaborative research
- Shared workspaces or hubs
- Regular forums for discussion and joint planning

Priorities for this Programme

This will be a competitive round. Priority will be given to proposals that:

- Show how they will use networks to deliver sustainability work
- Show their role within Mayo's sustainability work and why they are best placed to lead
- Show how their joint project will benefit Mayo's sustainability sector
- Explain how they will measure success

Project Duration

Funding must be used within 12 months. If you choose to apply for multi-annual funding, your proposal must include clear deliverables in the case that you receive one-year funding only.

Funding Available

This is the first year of the Mayo Sustainability Fund. While we hope to grow it in future years, only **one year of funding is currently guaranteed.**

However, we will accept multiannual applications with budgets outlined per annum. These multi-year requests help us plan for the future, though we cannot guarantee funding beyond the first year.

We welcome proposals at various funding levels and will assess them based on the Fund's criteria.

Generally, do not request more than 60% of your annual income. However, this can be flexible if a lead organisation can show they can manage the funds and deliver the project.

Eligible Costs

The funding can cover costs related to planning and delivering your project, including overheads costs. When you fill out the application form, please make sure that the budget reflects your project description and planned work.

Eligibility

Projects can be run by one or more organisations. A lead applicant must submit the application and will be responsible for delivering the project and reporting on its impact.

Eligible projects must:

- Align with the Fund's aims and objectives
- Take place in County Mayo

Ineligible projects include:

- Projects that qualify for the Community Foundation Biodiversity Fund
- Religious, political, or animal welfare activities
- Projects focused only on core costs or overheads
- Projects already completed
- Building projects (purchase or construction)

Eligible organisations must

- Be not-for-profit and based in Mayo
- Have at least two years of financial accounts

Ineligible organisations include:

- Schools, sports clubs, animal welfare groups
- Statutory bodies (can co-apply but not lead)
- Profit-making organisations
- New organisations
- Individuals
- Any organisation that has a current application with the Charities Regulator Authority to gain charity status

Application Process

This is a competitive round. Meeting the criteria does not guarantee funding.

Applications open:	Thursday 1 st May
Applications close:	Monday 16 th of June @ 4PM
Grant awards:	August
Projects start:	October 2025

Assessment Framework

Applications will be assessed on:

- Alignment with the criteria
- Proven need
- Budget, financial and governance capacity
- Expected impact

We will also consider diversity in location, project types, and community needs and other factors when assessing applications.

Reporting Requirements

Grant recipients must submit brief progress reports in February 2026 and a final report in October 2026. Reports must be submitted through our grants portal.

How to Apply

Apply via our online application form on the [Grants Portal](#).

Resources to help you use the portal are available on our website.

Webinar Support

We are hosting a support webinar at 10am on Friday May 9th to help applicants. This webinar covers both the Project Plus and Collaboration for Sustainability grants, including criteria, the form, and application tips. Sign up [here](#). A recording will also be available after the event.

Contacts

For questions, please contact Ailbhe McEntee at amcentee@foundation.ie